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ABSTRACT

Of 1,629 students enrolled in the fall semester of 1975 at Allegany Community College, 340 (20.9 percent) did not re-register for spring 1976. Although the fall enrollment contained almost twice as many full-time as part-time students, more than half of the non-returning students were part-time. Attrition also correlated to age of the students, grade point average (GPA), and whether the students had been classified as "special" students during the fall semester. In spring 1976, survey instruments were mailed to all non-returning students, except those 58 who had been suspended for academic reasons. A total of 178 former students (63.3 percent) responded to this survey, which asked the student's reason for discontinuing his enrollment. Twelve percent of the respondents said that they did not return because they had graduated. Each of the reasons "financial problems," "entered job market," and "achieved educational goals" were cited by 11.1 percent of the respondents; 9.2 percent had transferred to a four-year institution. About 20 percent of the respondents cited reasons unique to themselves, and not among the 10 choices on the survey instrument. Survey responses are correlated to sex, age, course load, GPA, and curriculum. Complete data are presented in tabular form, and the survey instrument is appended. (NHM)

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ALLEGANY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

ATTRITION

STUDY:

FALL SEMESTER, 1975 - SPRING SEMESTER, 1976

The Office of Institutional Research
Roger C. Andersen
May, 1976

JC 760 262

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INTRODUCTION

This report, divided into three parts, will seek to analyze the fall to spring attrition that Allegany Community College has experienced in the academic year 1975-1976. The ultimate objective of this study is to supply some valuable and informative data concerning the attrition at the College in order to be able to provide directions to selected College divisions for lowering A.C.C. attrition in the future. It is felt that by identifying (1) who the non-returner is (in terms of selected characteristics deemed important) and (2) the reasons why the non-returner does not come back to the College, that Allegany Community College can achieve this objective.

The first part of this report deals with the identification of the student who does not return. Entitled "WHO ARE THEY?", it examines a multitude of sources of data concerning the fall enrollment of A.C.C. (and the 340 non-returners in particular) in order to draw certain conclusions about the student in terms of five important variables: course load status, sex, GPA, age, and curriculum. The first part provides a summary and conclusion section designed to give a clear interpretation of the statistics presented.

Part II, "WHY DO THEY LEAVE?", is concerned with the reasons that students themselves give for not returning to A.C.C. this spring. This data, obtained through a survey instrument designed by the Office of Institutional Research, is tabulated in Part II in terms of total responses and by the five variables discussed in Part I. With a return-rate of over 60 percent, the survey utilized in Part II was constructed with the assistance of many College personnel. As with the first part, a summary and

conclusion section is designed to try and tie together many of the data themes weaved throughout this part.

Part III is designed to integrate the results of the first two parts and provide specific recommendations for the College as a whole toward the direction of lowering future fall to spring attrition at Allegany Community College.

PART 1: WHO ARE THEY?"

I. FALL ATTRITION RATE OVERALL

In the fall semester, 1975, 1629 students were enrolled. Of that total number of students that were enrolled, 340 did not return for the following spring semester, 1976. Hence, Allegany Community College experienced an attrition rate of 20.9 percent from the fall to the spring semesters of the 1975-76 academic year.

Fall Attrition Rate Overall = 20.9 percent

II. FALL ATTRITION RATE BY COURSE LOAD STATUS

Of the total headcount of 1629 students enrolled in the fall semester of A.C.C., 1080 (or 66.3 percent) were FULL-TIME and 549 (or 33.7 percent) were classified as PART-TIME.

Of the 340 students who did not re-register for the spring semester, 153 (or 45 percent) were FULL-TIME students and 187 (or 55 percent) were PART-TIME students.

Hence, although A.C.C. had almost twice as many FULL-TIME students than PART-TIME students in the fall semester, 1975, the non-returner* was most likely to be a PART-TIME student. This is also illustrated in the following:

ATTRITION RATE BY LOAD STATUS

Full-time students = 14.2%
Part-time students = 34.1%

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*The term "non-returner" throughout this study means the student who did not return for the spring semester, 1976.

III. FALL ATTRITION RATE BY SEX

The breakdown of the 1629 fall students by sex is as follows:

731 (or 44.9%) MALE
898 (or 55.1%) FEMALE

Of the 340 non-returners from the fall semester, 160 (or 47.1%) were MALE and 180 (or 52.9%) were FEMALE.

The corresponding attrition rates by sex are:

ATTRITION RATE BY SEX

male students = 21.9%
female students = 20.0%

From the data above, one can see that there is not a significant difference in the attrition rates by sex, ie., the non-returner is equally likely to be male or female.

IV. FALL ATTRITION BY GPA

Of the 340 students who did not return for the spring semester, 182 had a grade point average at the end of the fall semester that was greater than or equal to 2.0. Hence, 53.5 percent of the non-returners had a grade point average at A.C.C. that was at least a "C" or "academic achievement of quality acceptable in satisfying the minimum requirements for graduation." The remaining 158 (or 46.5%) had GPA's that were less than 2.0.

(NOTE: As was done for the previous categories, it is not possible to determine an attrition rate by GPA since student data at the start of the fall semester is incomplete. That is, many students who were enrolled at A.C.C. for the fall semester were there for the first time and did not have a GPA until the termination of the semester.)

Of the 158 students who had grade point averages that were below 2.0, 78 of them were suspended at the termination of the fall semester. However, 20 of those students who were suspended did return for the spring semester, 1976. Hence, 58 students were suspended and did not return for the spring semester.)*

With this data, it can be seen that of those non-returners who had GPA's below the "C" academic quality level, 36.7 percent were suspended.

*The College allows a student who is suspended to petition the Office of Admissions for readmission the following semester. Of the 78 suspended, (65 first suspensions, 13 second suspensions, and 0 third suspensions), 20 students, all first suspensions, subsequently did petition the Admissions Office and were readmitted for the spring semester.

V. FALL ATTRITION BY AGE

The following chart shows the attrition rate by age for the fall semester:

STUDENT AGE CATEGORY	# ENROLLED IN FALL SEMESTER	% OF FALL ENROLLMENT	# NON-RETURNING	% OF TOTAL NON-RETURNERS	ATTRITION RATE
16 - 19	797	48.9%	98	28.8%	12.3%
20 - 25	462	28.4%	116	34.1%	25.1%
26 - 30	133	8.2%	45	13.2%	33.8%
over 30	221	13.6%	69	20.3%	31.2%
age unavailable*	16		12		

*Student records concerning birthdate information were not complete. Hence, these students have to be considered unclassified for this analysis.

The data above shows that the age group that experiences the most significant attrition rate is the segment of age 26 through 30. Although this group had the smallest share of the fall enrollment (133 students or only 8.2%) and the smallest number of non-returners for the four categories defined

(45 non-returners of 13.2%), its attrition rate is the highest of the four age segments examined.

By sharp contrast, the age group of 16 to 19 had by far the greatest number of students enrolled in the fall semester (797 students or 48.9%). Enrolling almost half of the total fall population, it had the lowest non-return rate of all groups defined above. Of the 797 students enrolled, only 98 (or 12.3%) did not return for the spring. The non-returners from the 16 - 19 age group composed 28.8% of the 340 non-returners.

Hence, the above two paragraphs point to the fact that the age group that contains the largest number of students (16 - 19) has the lowest attrition rate and the age group that contains the smallest number of students (26-30) experiences the highest attrition rate.

The age group of students who are 20 to 25 years old demands a special look for the interesting statistics that it reveals. Enrolling 462 students (or 28.4% of the fall enrollment), it is the second largest student category in terms of percentage of the entire fall student population. Also, the 20 - 25 age bracket has the largest number of students who do not return to A.C.C. One hundred sixteen students (34.1% of all non-returners) of these six years of age did not return to A.C.C. for the spring semester. This yields an attrition rate of over 25 percent, more than double the attrition rate for the 16 to 19 age group.

The surprisingly low attrition rate for the first age group defined in the chart above is very pleasing. Conversely, the high attrition rates of the other age groups casts a certain curiosity of why this is the case (Part II of this report will seek to examine this question). Of these three age groups that experience this better than one out of every four students non-returning, the one that justifies the most attention is the 20 - 25 years of age segment.

ATTRITION BY CURRICULUM

The table on the following page illustrates the attrition from the fall semester, 1975, to the spring semester, 1976, by Allegany Community College curriculum.

Note that the categories of "special", "early placement", and "transient students" have been included in this table although they were not curriculums offered by the College. This was done in order to be able to fully subdivide the fall enrollment.

Note also that any curriculum or category that enrolled fewer than 20 students was not considered for this attrition by curriculum study. Hence, the abbreviations of "not applicable" or "N.A." in the ATTRITION RATE column of the table.

From the table one can see that the category of "special" students accounted for 207 of the 1629 enrolled students (or 12.7%) of the fall semester. Of this 207, over half did not return for the spring semester, yielding an attrition rate of 50.7% for this category of students. This large percentage is to be expected to a certain extent due to the nature of the category of the special admission itself.*

In direct contrast, the Dental Hygiene Program, which enrolled 85 (or 5.2%) students in the fall semester retained all but one of those students in the spring semester. This curriculum has the lowest attrition rate of 1.2%.

The following chart illustrates the curriculums and categories that are on opposite ends of the attrition spectrum.

CURRICULUMS/CATEGORIES HAVING AN ATTRITION RATE OF LESS THAN 10%

#1 - Dental Hygiene (1.2%)

#2 - Engineering (4.8%)

#3 - Arts and Sciences (Sciences) (5.0%)

#4 - Pre-Dental Hygiene (7.7%)
Mental Health Technology (7.7%)

#5 - Medical Laboratory Technology (8.0%)

#6 - Electro-Mechanical Technology (9.4%)

GREATER THAN 20%

#1 - Special (50.7%)

#2 - Teacher Education (34.8%)

#3 - Pre-Medical Laboratory Technology (29.2%)

#4 - Recreational Leadership (28.6%)

#5 - Arts and Sciences (Arts) (26.7%)

#6 - Automotive Technology (25.0%)

#7 - Nursing (24.7%)

#8 - Law Enforcement Training Program (23.8%)

#9 - General Studies (20.8%)

#10 - Early Placement (20.5%)

*A "special student" is one who does not meet the entrance requirements for the College but who gives evidence of ability and hence, may be admitted to take college-level courses to fit his individual need or interest.

ATTRITION BY CURRICULUM

A.C.C. CURRICULUM	# OF STUDENTS ENROLLED FALL SEMESTER, 1975	# OF STUDENTS NON-RETURNING SPRING, 1976	ATTRITION RATE FOR A.C.C. CURRICULUM
Special	207	105	50.7%
Arts and Sciences (Arts)	30	8	26.7%
Arts and Sciences (Sciences)	20	1	5.0%
Automotive Technology	48	12	25.0%
Auto Service Tech Training	0	0	N.A.
Business Administration	106	19	17.9%
Business Training Certificate	7	0	N.A.
Chemical Technology	4	0	N.A.
Dental Hygiene	85	1	1.2%
Pre-Dental Hygiene	52	4	7.7%
Dental Assistant Program	23	3	13.0%
Pre-Dental Assistant Program	5	0	N.A.
EDP Technology	42	8	19.0%
EDP Computer Science	7	1	N.A.
EDP Operator Program	1	0	N.A.
Electro-Mechanical Technology	32	3	9.4%
Pre-Electro-Mechanical Tech	0	0	N.A.
Engineering	21	1	4.8%
Forestry	34	5	14.7%
Forest Technology	74	10	13.5%
General Studies	212	44	20.8%
Law Enforcement Training Program	21	5	23.8%
Medical Laboratory Technology	25	2	8.0%
Pre-Medical Lab Technology	24	7	29.2%
Mental Health Technology	65	5	7.7%
Pre-Mental Health Technology	32	4	12.5%
Mental Health Aide	1	0	N.A.
Nursing	81	20	24.7%
Pre-Nursing	153	22	14.4%
Quality Control Technology	2	0	N.A.
Recreational Leadership	35	10	28.6%
Secretarial Science (including Certificate Program)	108	19	17.6%
Teacher Education	23	8	34.8%
Transient Students	5	4	N.A.
Early Placement	44	9	20.5%
	TOTAL = 1629	TOTAL = 340	WEIGHED AVE. FOR ALL CUR. = 20.9%

SUMMARY

Over 1 out of every 5 students enrolled at Allegany Community College in the fall of 1975 did not return for the spring semester. The actual fall to spring attrition rate was 20.9% for the academic year 1975-1976.

In terms of the statistics presented in Part I, it can be seen that:

(1) A part-time student is more than twice as likely to leave the College after the fall semester than a full-time student. Part-time students have an attrition rate of 34.1% as compared to only 14.2% for full-time students.

(2) Although the fall enrollment contains almost twice as many full-time students as part-time students, more than half the students not returning for the spring were part-time students.

(3) Male students and female students have essentially the same attrition rate. I.e., it is just as likely that a male student will choose not to return to the College for the spring semester as a female student.

(4) Almost half (46.5%) of the students non-returning had grade point averages less than 2.0.

(5) The group of students in the age range from 16 to 19, though composing almost half (48.9%) of the total fall enrollment of 1629, had the lowest attrition rate of all four age groups studied. This extremely low attrition rate of 12.3% is one of the most pleasing indicators for the College overall.

(6) The group of students in the age range from 20 to 25, composing 29.4% of the fall enrollment, accounted for 34.1% of all the non-returners. By sharp contrast, this age group held an attrition rate of over 25%.

(7) A student 20 to 25 years of age is more than twice as likely to leave the College after the fall semester as a student 16 to 19 years old.

(8) The group of students ranging in age from 26 to 30 years old have the highest rate of attrition of all age groups considered: 33.8%.

(9) More than half of the students who did not return in January to A.C.C. were classified as "special" students during the fall semester

The conclusion can be drawn from this information presented above that the student who does not return in the spring semester 1976 to A.C.C. possesses at least one of the following qualities:

-20 to 25 years of age

-part-time

-low GPA (less than 2.0)

-special student (upon A.C.C. admission)

In order to see how the variable of part-time correlates with selected variables discussed above, an analysis was done with the results presented in the table below:

PERCENT AND NUMBER OF STUDENTS BOTH PART-TIME AND:

WITH GPA LESS THAN 2.0	AGE: 20 to 25
NUMBER = 75	NUMBER = 68
PERCENTAGE = 22.1	PERCENTAGE = 20.0

As one can see from the above figures, exactly 1/5 of the non-returner population from the fall semester was both part-time and between the ages of 20 to 25. This means that of the 116 students who were 20 to 25 years of age, 58.6% of them were part-timers.

Also, over 22% of the 340 students who did not return for the spring were part-timers and held a GPA less than a "C" level. Hence, of the 158 students that had GPA's less than 2.0, almost half (47.5%) were part-timers.

These additional facts are summarized in the following:

(10) 1 out of every five students non-returning is a part-timer between the ages of 20 to 25.

(11) Over 1 out of every five students non-returning is a part-timer with a GPA less than a 2.0.

PART II: "WHY DO THEY LEAVE?"

Part II of this report is concerned with the reasons students give for not returning to Allegany Community College this spring semester, 1976.

Unlike the data presented in the first part of this paper, this information had to be retrieved via a survey instrument sent to members of the College's non-returner population. (See Appendix for copy of survey instrument). Since 58 of the 340 students who did not return in the spring were suspended, questionnaires were not sent to these 58 students. (The reason for their non-returning being of an academic nature). Hence, 281 surveys were mailed out in early March. A total of 178 surveys were returned. This represents a survey response rate of 63.3 percent.

The tables presented in this part illustrate the student responses in total and broken down by sex, GPA, course load status, and age. Each of the three tables includes the total response in order that comparisons of the variables isolated for analysis (sex, GPA, course load status, and age) may be more easily made.

STUDENT REASONS: ALL RESPONSES

Table I (and all three tables) lists the survey results for all students who responded to the questionnaire.

The first question asked the student to indicate the reason or reasons why he/she did not return to A.C.C. this semester and presented the student with a list of ten specific options plus an "other" option. (See Appendix for copy of survey instrument). From Table I, it can be seen that 26 students or 12.0 percent of all reasons given by all respondents indicated that the reason they did not return was that they "completed course requirements for a degree or certificate". 9.2 percent indicated they

transferred to a four-year institution. Each of the reasons "financial problems", "entered job market", and "achieved educational goals" were indicated by 24 students or 11.1 percent of all responses.

Hence, over half of the reasons (54.5%) given for not returning to A.C.C. this spring were "completed course requirements for a degree or certificate," "financial problems," "entered job market," "achieved educational goals," and "transferred to a four-year college or university."

The top five categories receiving the largest percentage of responses to this question were as follows: (responses below are ranked in order of importance.)

#1. other - 19.4%

#2. completed course requirements for a degree or certificate - 12.0%

#3. financial problems - 11.1%

entered job market - 11.1%

achieved educational goals - 11.1%

Of the eleven response categories offered to the student, the one receiving the largest share of the students' indications was the "other" category. Forty-two students or 19.4 percent indicated this category and stated what their particular reason was. Hence, from this response alone, one can see that close to one out of five students indicate reasons that are fairly unique to them for not returning to A.C.C. Some of the 42 varied responses given in this "other" category include:

-had to move/left area

-personal reasons

-could not get baby-sitter

-travel

-change of job schedule

-couldn't handle both high school and college

-just did not like college

-scheduling of A.C.C. spring courses conflicting with work hours

-needed at home

-lack of transportation to A.C.C.

-pregnancy

When asked, "Were you satisfied with your educational experiences at A.C.C.?", 91.2 percent stated yes. Questioned about if they plan to return to A.C.C., almost half (45.8%) stated yes, while 29.4 percent students didn't know and 24.4 percent responded no. To those who answered "yes," we further asked "when?" and gave a choice of four options. Almost half of the respondents stated they were not sure when they would return. Over 35 percent stated they would come back in the fall, 1976.

TABLE 1 - RESPONSES : TOTAL AND BY SEX

1. PLEASE INDICATE THE REASON(S) WHY YOU DID NOT RETURN TO ACC THIS SEMESTER.

ITEM	ALL RESPONSES	ALL MALES	ALL FEMALES
completed course requirements for a degree or certificate	N = 26 % = 12.0%	N = 7 % = 8.8%	N = 16 % = 13.6%
financial problems	N = 24 % = 11.1	N = 10 % = 12.5	N = 14 % = 11.9
entered job market	N = 24 % = 11.1	N = 8 % = 10	N = 15 % = 12.7
achieved educational goals	N = 24 % = 11.1	N = 6 % = 7.5	N = 13 % = 11.0
military service	N = 4 % = 1.8	N = 4 % = 5	N = 0 % = 0
medical reasons	N = 15 % = 6.9	N = 5 % = 6.3	N = 9 % = 7.6
marriage	N = 9 % = 4.1	N = 1 % = 1.3	N = 8 % = 6.8
not satisfied with curriculum	N = 18 % = 8.3	N = 10 % = 12.5	N = 5 % = 4.2
transferred to a four-year college or university	N = 20 % = 9.2	N = 7 % = 8.8	N = 10 % = 8.5
changed my career goals	N = 11 % = 5.1	N = 4 % = 5	N = 6 % = 5.1
other	N = 42 % = 19.4	N = 18 % = 22.5	N = 22 % = 18.6

Totals: All responses = 217
All Males = 80
All Females = 118
Sex unclassified = [illegible]

TABLE I (cont.) - RESPONSES: TOTAL AND BY SEX

2. DO YOU PLAN TO RETURN TO ACC?

ITEM	ALL RESPONSES	ALL MALES	ALL FEMALES
No	N = 41 % = 24.4	N = 16 % = 23.9	N = 22 % = 26.5
Don't Know	N = 50 % = 29.8	N = 20 % = 29.9	N = 23 % = 27.7
Yes	N = 77 % = 45.8	N = 31 % = 46.3	N = 40 % = 48.2
Summer	N = 11 % = 10.6	N = 3 % = 7.1	N = 8 % = 15.4
Fall	N = 37 % = 35.6	N = 15 % = 35.7	N = 21 % = 40.4
Spring	N = 5 % = 4.8	N = 1 % = 2.4	N = 3 % = 5.8
Don't Know	N = 51 % = 49.0	N = 23 % = 54.8	N = 20 % = 38.5

N = 83)
N = 52) Female

N = 67)
N = 42) Male

N = 168)
N = 104) All responses

3. WERE YOU SATISFIED WITH YOUR EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES AT ACC?

ITEM	ALL RESPONSES	ALL MALES	ALL FEMALES
Yes	N = 155 % = 91.2	N = 59 % = 89.4	N = 85 % = 95.5
No	N = 15 % = 8.8	N = 7 % = 10.6	N = 5 % = 4.5

Totals: All responses = 170
All Males 66
All Females 89
Sex unclassified 15

SUMMARY: STUDENT REASONS: ALL RESPONSES

(1) There is no one reason that achieved over 20 percent of the 217 responses to this question.

(2) Students overall do not to any significant number indicate that financial problems were the reason for their not returning to A.C.C. Only 11.1 percent of the students checked off this response.

(3) Many of the reasons for not returning seem to be a unique set of circumstances to the individual student. About 20 percent of the responses were outside of the ten listed options of the survey instrument.

(4) Over half of the reasons given indicated one of the following:
-transferred to a four-year college or university
-financial problems
-entered job market
-achieved educational goals

(5) Only 18 of the 217 students (8.3%) indicated that they left because they were "not satisfied with the curriculum" offered at A.C.C.

(6) Over nine out of ten students were satisfied with their educational experiences at A.C.C.

(7) 45.8 percent of the students plan to return to A.C.C., though half of these students don't know when.

STUDENT RESPONSE BY SEX

Table I presents the survey responses by sex. It can be seen that 13.6 percent of the female population stated that one of the reasons they left was that they completed their course requirements for a degree or certificate at A.C.C. as compared to only 8.8 percent of the male population. Similarly, 11.0 percent of the females indicated they achieved their educational goals as one of the factors in leaving A.C.C. in the fall as compared to 7.5 percent of the males. 6.8 percent of the females listed "marriage" as a reason for departing while only 1.3 percent of the men indicated matrimony.

In general, the top five categories ranked in terms of importance by each sex are as follows:

MALE

1 - other - 22.5%

2 - financial problems - 12.5%

3 - entered job market - 10%

4 - transferred to a four-year college or university - 8.8%

-- completed course requirements - 8.8%

1 - other - 18.6%

2 - completed course requirements - 13.6%

3 - entered job market - 12.7%

4 - financial problems - 11.9%

5 - achieved educational goals - 11.0%

(Note the single category dominance of the "other" category as the primary response which was discussed earlier in the ALL RESPONSES section). Where both sexes tend to list financial problems, entering the job market, medical reasons, transferred to a four-year college or university basically the same, their reasons differ significantly on some other items as the chart above indicates. For example, completed course requirements or achieved educational goals was given as a reason for leaving by almost 1/4 of the women; whereas only 16.3 percent of the men indicated this.

When asked if they were satisfied with the educational experiences they had at A.C.C., 95.5 percent of the women said yes while 89.4 percent of the men said yes. However, about the same percentage of men (46.3%) and women (48.2%) plan to return to A.C.C. in the future, though the men were much more uncertain of exactly when.

Student Response by Course Load Status

Table II lists the data for the survey in terms of course load status (full-time/part-time).

The top five categories ranked in terms of importance by each division are as follows:

Full-time

1 - entered job market - 19.1%

2 - completed course requirements - 16.2%

3 - financial problems - 16.2%

4 - transferred to a four-year university - 13.2%

5 - other - 8.8%

1 - other - 24.4%

2 - achieved educational goals - 14.0%

3 - completed course requirements - 9.6%

4 - financial problems - 9.6%

5 - not satisfied with curriculum - 9.6%

Hence, significant differences can be found in the responses to this item by full-time students as compared to part-time students. Almost one (1) out of five (5) full-time students stated they left A.C.C. to enter the job market (in the start of 1976).

The four factors of entered job market, completed course requirements, financial problems, and transferred to a four-year institution constituted 64.7 percent of all responses by the full-time students. Over one-fourth of the part-time students checked the "other" category and stated their reason. Hence, one can see the great diversity and uniqueness of responses by part-time students as compared to full-time. Most of these reasons stated here are job related (change of job hours; had to move in my new job; etc.). However, 14.0 percent of the part-timers indicated that they left after achieving their educational goals; i.e., 14 percent of the part-time non-returners stated that they came to A.C.C. with a particular end in mind (to take a specific course or courses, to upgrade their job skill, etc.) and having reached their objective, they left after the fall semester.

Whereas 16.2 percent of the full-time students listed financial problems as a factor or the factor for not returning, this was noted by only 9.6 percent of the part-timers. Also part-timers were over twice as critical of the A.C.C. curriculum and listed it as a reason for not returning (9.6 percent compared to 4.4 percent) than full-timers. Almost 0 out of 10 part-timers registered his dissatisfaction of the A.C.C. curriculum as a reason for not returning.

93.7 percent and 91.7 percent of the part-timers and full-timers respectively were satisfied with their educational experiences at A.C.C. 53.8 percent of the part-time students plan to return to A.C.C., although half did not know when. Almost 4 out of 10 of the full-time students and the part-time students said they plan to return in the coming fall.

Student Responses by GPA

Table II shows the students responses by grade point average, (GPA) with the two categories defined being GPA less than 2.0 and GPA greater than or equal to 2.0.

The top five categories ranked in terms of importance by each of the two divisions defined were as follows:

GPA Greater Than or Equal to 2	GPA Less Than 2
1 - completed course requirements - 17.2%	1 - other - 29.6%
2 - other - 14.8%	2 - financial problems - 14.8%
3 - transferred to a four-year college or university - 13.3%	3 - entered job market - 13.0%
4 - achieved educational goals - 12.5%	4 - not satisfied with curriculum - 11.1%
5 - financial problems - 10.9%	5 - medical reasons and changed my goals - 9.3%

The dominance of the "other" category for former students who had a grade point average less than a "C" academic achievement level indicates once again the relative uniqueness of the reasons given by students in this category.

Whereas no student with a GPA less than 2 responded he left the college after completion of course requirements for a degree or certificate, this reason was the one most often given by students with GPA's greater than or equal to 2.

Over one-fourth of the students with GPA greater than or equal to 2 indicated they left because they achieved their educational goals or transferred to a four-year institution. Students with GPA's less than 2 were almost twice as dissatisfied with the A.C.C. curriculum (11.1% to 6.3%) as students with GPA's "C" or better.

Exactly half of the students with GPA's greater than or equal to 2.0 did not know when they would return to A.C.C. as compared to 37 percent of the students with GPA less than 2.0 that gave this response. Almost half of the students with GPA's less that 2 indicated they planned to return for the fall semester of this year. 34.5 percent of the students with GPA greater than or equal to 2.0 indicated this.

94.2 percent of the students in the upper GPA category were satisfied with their education experiences at A.C.C. The corresponding statistic for those students in the lower GPA category was 89.7 percent.

TABLE II - RESPONSES: GPA AND BY COURSE LOAD STATUS

1. PLEASE INDICATE THE REASON(S) WHY YOU DID NOT RETURN TO ACC THIS SEMESTER.

ITEM	ALL RESPONSES	GPA GREATER THAN OR EQUAL TO 2	GPA LESS THAN 2	FULL-TIME	PART-TIME
completed course requirements for a degree or certificate	N = 26 % = 12.0	N = 22 % = 17.2	N = 0 % = 0	N = 11 % = 16.2	N = 11 % = 9.6
financial problems	N = 24 % = 11.1	N = 14 % = 10.9	N = 8 % = 14.8	N = 11 % = 16.2	N = 11 % = 9.6
entered job market	N = 24 % = 11.1	N = 13 % = 10.2	N = 7 % = 13.0	N = 13 % = 19.1	N = 7 % = 6.1
achieved educational goals	N = 24 % = 11.1	N = 16 % = 12.5	N = 3 % = 5.6	N = 3 % = 4.4	N = 16 % = 14.0
military service	N = 4 % = 1.8	N = 1 % = .8	N = 3 % = 5.6	N = 3 % = 4.4	N = 1 % = .9
medical reasons	N = 15 % = 6.9	N = 7 % = 5.5	N = 5 % = 9.3	N = 3 % = 4.4	N = 9 % = 7.9
marriage	N = 9 % = 4.1	N = 6 % = 4.7	N = 1 % = 1.9	N = 2 % = 2.9	N = 5 % = 4.4
not satisfied with curriculum	N = 18 % = 8.3	N = 8 % = 6.3	N = 6 % = 11.1	N = 3 % = 4.4	N = 11 % = 9.6
transferrred to a four-year college or university	N = 20 % = 9.2	N = 17 % = 13.3	N = 0 % = 0	N = 9 % = 13.2	N = 8 % = 7.0
changed my career goals	N = 11 % = 5.1	N = 5 % = 3.9	N = 5 % = 9.3	N = 4 % = 5.9	N = 6 % = 5.3
other	N = 42 % = 19.4	N = 19 % = 14.8	N = 16 % = 29.6	N = 6 % = 8.8	N = 29 % = 25.4
TOTALS	N = 217	N = 128	N = 54	N = 68	N = 114

TABLE II (con't) - RESPONSES: GPA AND BY COURSE LOAD STATUS

2. DO YOU PLAN TO RETURN TO A.C.C.?

ITEM	ALL RESPONSES	GPA GREATER THAN OR EQUAL TO 2	GPA LESS THAN 2	FULL-TIME	PART-TIME
No	N = 41 % = 24.4	N = 31 % = 31.3	N = 4 % = 9.8	N = 19 % = 38.8	N = 16 % = 17.6
Don't know	N = 50 % = 29.8	N = 21 % = 21.2	N = 18 % = 43.9	N = 13 % = 26.5	N = 26 % = 28.6
Yes	N = 77 % = 45.8	N = 47 % = 47.5	N = 19 % = 46.3	N = 17 % = 34.7	N = 49 % = 53.8
Summer	N = 11 % = 10.6	N = 6 % = 10.3	N = 4 % = 14.8	N = 4 % = 19.0	N = 6 % = 9.2
Fall	N = 37 % = 35.6	N = 20 % = 34.5	N = 13 % = 48.1	N = 8 % = 38.1	N = 25 % = 38.5
Spring	N = 5 % = 4.8	N = 3 % = 5.2	N = 1 % = 3.7	N = 2 % = 9.5	N = 2 % = 3.1
Don't know	N = 51 % = 49.0	N = 29 % = 50	N = 10 % = 37.0	N = 7 % = 33.3	N = 32 % = 49.2

3. WERE YOU SATISFIED WITH YOUR EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES AT ACC:

ITEM					
Yes	N = 155 % = 91.2	N = 98 % = 94.2	N = 35 % = 89.7	N = 44 % = 91.7	N = 89 % = 93.7
No	N = 15 % = 8.8	N = 6 % = 5.8	N = 4 % = 10.3	N = 4 % = 8.3	N = 6 % = 6.3
TOTALS	N = 217 N = 168 N = 104 N = 170	N = 128 N = 99 N = 58 N = 104	N = 54 N = 41 N = 27 N = 39	N = 68 N = 49 N = 21 N = 48	N = 114 N = 91 N = 65 N = 95

Student responses by Age

Age 17-19	Age 20-25	Age 26-30	Age over 30
#1 other 29%	#1 completed course requirements 23%	#1 other 28.1%	#1 achieved educational goals 26.2%
#2 entered job market 12.9%	#2 financial problems 14.9%	#2 financial problems 15.6%	#2 other 21.4%
#3 not satisfied with curriculum 12.9%	#3 entered job market 13.5%	#3 achieved educationsl goals 12.9%	#3 entered job market 11.9%
#4 financial problems 9.7%	#4 transferred to a four-year institution 12.2%	#4 transferred to a four-year institution 12.5%	#4 medical reasons 11.9%
#5 transferred to a four-year institution 9.7%	#5 other 9.5%	#5 not satisfied with curriculum 9.4%	#5 completed course requirements 7.1%
- changed career goals 9.7%			

The diversity of the reasons given and the respective rankings by AGE is evident in the above data.

The primary reasons students age 20-25 left the College in the fall is that they completed their course requirements for a degree or certificate. However, almost 15 percent of this age group had to leave due to financial problems. By contrast, the group of students over 30 years of age responded that the primary reason they left after the fall semester was that they had achieved their educational goals, a response that was absent from the top five ranking of the 20-25 year-old student category.

Also financial problems ranged from a low of 9.7% in the age bracket of 17-19 to a high of 15.6% for students of age 26-30. Almost 15% of the non-returners stated financial problems in the age group of 20 to 25 years of age, while only 4.8% of the over 30 age group stated this reason.

However, for all ages considered, between 91.2 percent to 94.6 of the students were satisfied with their educational experiences at A.C.C. The percent of those students who plan to return to A.C.C. continuously increases with the age categories: from a low of 34.6 percent of the 17-19 year old category to a high 61.3 percent of the "over 30" age category. The question of when each group did plan to return varied widely as Table II shows.

TABLE III - RESPONSES: TOTAL AND BY AGE

1. PLEASE INDICATE THE REASON(S) WHY YOU DID NOT RETURN TO ACC THIS SEMESTER.

ITEM	ALL RESPONSES	AGES 17-19	AGE 20-25	AGE 26-30	AGE Over 30
completed course requirements for a degree or certificate	N = 26 % = 12.0	N = 0 % = 0	N = 17 % = 23.0	N = 2 % = 6.3	N = 3 % = 7.1
financial problems	N = 24 % = 11.1	N = 3 % = 9.7	N = 11 % = 14.9	N = 5 % = 15.6	N = 2 % = 4.8
entered job market	N = 24 % = 11.1	N = 4 % = 12.9	N = 10 % = 13.5	N = 1 % = 3.1	N = 5 % = 11.9
achieved educational goals	N = 24 % = 11.1	N = 0 % = 0	N = 4 % = 5.4	N = 4 % = 12.5	N = 11 % = 26.2
military service	N = 4 % = 1.8	N = 2 % = 6.5	N = 1 % = 1.4	N = 0 % = 0	N = 1 % = 2.4
medical reasons	N = 15 % = 6.9	N = 1 % = 3.2	N = 4 % = 5.4	N = 2 % = 6.3	N = 5 % = 11.9
marriage	N = 9 % = 4.1	N = 2 % = 6.5	N = 2 % = 2.7	N = 1 % = 3.1	N = 2 % = 4.8
not satisfied with curriculum	N = 18 % = 8.3	N = 4 % = 12.9	N = 4 % = 5.4	N = 3 % = 9.4	N = 2 % = 4.8
transferred to a four-year college or university	N = 20 % = -.2	N = 3 % 9.7	N = 9 % = 12.2	N = 4 % = 12.5	N = 1 % = 2.4
changed my career goals	N = 11 % = 5.1	N = 3 % = 9.7	N = 5 % = 6.8	N = 1 % = 3.1	N = 1 % = 2.4
other	N = 42 % = 19.4	N = 9 % = 29.0	N = 7 % = 9.5	N = 9 % = 28.1	N = 9 % = 21.4

TOTALS

All Responses = 217 Age 17-19 = 31 Age 20-25 = 74 Age 26-30 = 32 Age Over 30 = 42

TABLE III (cont.) - RESPONSES: TOTAL AND BY AGE

2. DO YOU PLAN TO RETURN TO ACC?

ITEM	ALL RESPONSES	AGE 17-19	AGE 20-25	AGE 26-30	AGE-Over 30
No	N = 41 % = 24.4	N = 8 % = 22.2	N = 17 % = 30.9	N = 7 % = 26.9	N = 3 % = 9.7
Don't know	N = 50 % = 29.8	N = 9 % = 34.6	N = 14 % = 24.5	N = 6 % = 23.1	N = 9 % = 29.0
Yes	N = 77 % = 45.8	N = 9 % = 34.6	N = 24 % = 43.6	N = 13 % = 50.	N = 19 % = 61.3
Summer	N = 11 % = 10.6	N = 0 % = 0	N = 8 % = 24.2	N = 1 % = 7.1	N = 1 % = 4
Fall	N = 37 % = 35.6	N = 8 % = 66.7	N = 12 % = 36.4	N = 5 % = 35.7	N = 7 % = 28
Spring	N = 5 % = 4.8	N = 1 % = 8.3	N = 2 % = 6.1	N = 1 % = 7.1	N = 0 % = 0
Don't know	N = 51 % = 49.0	N = 3 % = 2.5	N = 11 % = 33.3	N = 7 % = 50.	N = 17 % = 68

3. WERE YOU SATISFIED WITH YOUR EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES AT ACC?

ITEM					
Yes	N = 155 % = 91.2	N = 23 % = 92	N = 53 % = 94.6	N = 24 % = 92.3	N = 31 % = 91.2
No	N = 15 % = 8.8	N = 2 % = 8	N = 3 % = 5.4	N = 2 % = 7.7	N = 3 % = 8.8
TOTALS	N = 217 N = 168 N = 104 N = 170	N = 31 N = 26 N = 12 N = 25	N = 74 N = 55 N = 33 N = 56	N = 32 N = 26 N = 14 N = 26	N = 42 N = 31 N = 25 N = 34

Student responses by Curriculum

Because of the great multitude of A.C.C. curriculums (and categories), this report will not include a breakdown of the reasons why students classified in each individual curriculum (and category) did not return. However, this information is available and upon the request of any Allegany Community College faculty member or administrator this data may be obtained from the Office of Institutional Research, either for selected curriculums or for all curriculums (and categories) as stated in the first part of this report.

SUMMARY

Part II of this paper has been concerned with why students left Allegany Community College after the fall semester, 1975. This data was retrieved via a survey instrument that was prepared by the Office of Institutional Research which included suggestions and revisions from a multitude of College divisions. This data collected was tabulated in this Part II in total and subdivided into variables that were used throughout Part I of this paper.

A major conclusion that can be drawn from the ALL RESPONSES data of this survey and noting that 42 out of the 217 total responses (or 19.4%) received to this question stated a reason "other" than the 10 responses offered to the student is that the student decision making process about not returning to A.C.C. is, to a large extent, a unique one to the individual. In other words, out of the 42 responses received in the "other" category, it was rare if two were the same.

Since the "other" category is really a combination of one-response categories, the real item that received the largest percentage of responses in the ALL RESPONSES data was completed course requirements for a degree or certificate. However, this received only 12.0% of the total responses given. Hence, it can be seen that no one reason in the overall analysis stands out to any major extent.

Some single reasons do stand out in the analyses done by the four variables considered, although these will be incorporated into the third and final part of this paper.

PART III: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The chart on the accompanying page summarizes the major findings from Part I and Part II of this research report.

The major reason students do not return to Allegany Community College is that they "completed their course requirements for a degree or certificate." Since this is a "pleasant" reason and requires no action of the College to react, it is clear that the College should move toward increasing the percentage of students who leave for this reason above the 12 percent stated in this report.

The second most reason stated by the respondents is a virtual three-place tie among:

financial problems
entered job market
achieved educational goals

all of which maintained 11.1 percent of the total responses given. Once again, the reason of "achieved educational goals" represents no problem in this study of the fall drop-out since the student has reached the objective that he/she personally set upon entrance or during his/her time at A.C.C.

The two other second-place reasons, "financial problems" and "entered job market" can be assumed to be interrelated to a certain extent. Financial reasons have usually been identified as the major cause or a major cause for student withdrawal at many four-year and two-year institutions, (Rowell, 1974). By following the "financial problems" row of the table across from left to right it can be seen that this reason was stated almost equally by males and females. However, full-time students checked this reason much more often than part-time students and students of age 20-30 were more affected by money problems than the students below 20 or over 30 years of age. Hence in trying to overcome or lower

SUMMARY CHART

All Numbers in the Chart Below are Percentages

Major Reasons Given / Response Groups	Total	All Male	All Female	Full-Time	Part-Time	GPA Less Than 2	GPA Greater Than 2	Age 17- 19	Age 20- 25	Age 26- 30	O
Attrition Rate of Responses Gr.	20.9	21.9	20.0	14.2	34.1	N.A.	N.A.	12.3	25.1	33.8	3
"Completed course requirements for a degree or Certificate"	12.0	8.8	13.6	16.2	9.6	0.0	17.2	0.0	23.0	6.3	
"Financial Problems"	11.1	12.5	11.9	16.2	9.6	14.8	10.9	9.7	14.9	15.6	
"Entered Job Market"	11.1	10.0	12.7	19.1	6.1	13.0	10.2	12.9	13.5	3.1	1
"Achieved Educational Goals"	11.1	7.5	11.0	4.4	14.0	5.6	12.5	0.0	5.4	12.5	2
"Transferred to a four-year college or university"	9.2	8.8	8.5	13.2	7.0	0.0	13.3	9.7	12.2	12.5	
"Other"	19.4	22.5	18.6	8.8	25.4	29.6	14.8	29.0	9.5	28.1	2
Were Satisfied with educational experiences at ACC	91.2	89.4	95.5	91.7	93.7	94.2	89.7	92.0	94.6	92.3	9
Plan to return to ACC	45.8	46.3	48.2	34.7	53.8	46.3	47.5	34.6	43.6	50.0	6

this percentage of students who do state financial problems as a (or the) reason for leaving, the college should devote more resources to information dissemination in the form of newspaper and radio announcements and brochures dealing with financial aid availability. In this move toward further "advertising" the College's strong financial programs the focus should be primarily placed on the students who need it the most, as identified in this paragraph and the chart of this section. It is felt that a reduction in the number of drop-outs via this College effort will also result in a similar reduction in the number of students who leave to enter the job market. (By comparing the two rows of these reasons in the chart, one can see the similarities in response group percentages for both of these reasons.)

The fact that 9.2 percent of the students who left the College after the fall semester "transferred to a four-year college or university" reflects an area of continuous concern to the College as reflected by some FOLLOW-UP facts. (Perhaps the most alarming that is related to this reason is that of those students that did transfer to a four-year institution, 59 percent did not receive the A.A. degree from A.C.C.) Via examination of numerous potential solutions to this problem, primarily a reassessment of the curriculum without walls (CWW) program--projected to begin in the fall semester 1976, the College may be able to reduce the number of students who leave after the fall semester to transfer without obtaining their A.A. degree.

The "other" category was checked by almost one-fifth of the students as a (or the) reason for not returning. Almost all stated their particular reason and (as mentioned earlier) almost all reasons were unique to the person involved (i.e. the same reason was rarely given by more than one of the respondents). This illustrates the complex and personalized nature of the attrition problem where the causative agents in drop-out are of an extremely diverse range. From research

performed elsewhere, it has been found that extensive counseling in the academic domain and the personal domain does reduce the attrition rate on the community college level (Jones, 1972). At the level of academic and personal counseling, it is probable that this large segment of non-returners can be reduced in number via careful guidance by the A.C.C. counseling division.

It is hoped that this report has at least partially identified the spring non-returner in order that the counseling function can focus more easily on this population.

An interesting finding is stated in the following:

> Attrition rate and the number of courses dropped prior to leaving was studied in Kansas City, and it is interesting to note that 70 percent of the females and 59 percent of the males dropped two courses prior to finally withdrawing (Alfred, 1972). Registrar's offices and counselors working together could make good use of such warning signs as definite outcries from the student for help. Here is an area where intervention by a counselor could indeed prevent a student from becoming part of the statistics on attrition. (Rowell, 1974).

This is one potential remedy that would involve inter-campus cooperation and provide a potential drop-out population base to the A.C.C. counseling division.

It can be seen from the next to last row of the Summary Chart that the students who do leave Allegany Community College in the fall are satisfied with their educational experiences that they had received at the College. Overall the percentage is 91.2, with a range having a low of only 89.4% (male population) and possessing a high of 95.5% (female population). Hence, dissatisfaction with the College is not an important factor in the students' choice not to return to A.C.C.

Another finding that can be seen in the last row of the Summary Chart is that

a large percentage of these students who have left do plan to return. 45.8% of the respondents answered that they do plan to continue their education at Allegany Community College (with the majority of this group indicating that they are currently uncertain of actually when they will return.) Hence from the students' responses, it appears that a little less than half of this population of fall drop-outs will once again return to A.C.C. (One can see in the last row of the chart that the range is from a low of 34.7% (full-time students) to a high value of 61.2% (students over 30 years of age.)

IN CONCLUSION, this report has tried to analyze the student attrition at Allegany Community College to discover if (1) a problem of significant proportions exists and (2) if so, what measures should be taken to try and lower this attrition rate. From analyzing the almost 21% fall attrition rate by groups and reasons, it has been seen that much of this attrition is indeed the type "favorable" to the College. That is, 23.1% of the reasons given by the spring non-returners were either "completed course requirements for a degree or certificate"or" achieved educational goals." Also, almost half of the non-returners do plan to return to A.C.C. in the future. With only 11% indicating financial problems, and with a wide range of diverse and personalized reasons given by the respondents for non-returning, the recommendations made within this section were deemed appropriate. Clearly the focal body for attacking the attrition problem at the College with the end of reducing the number of students who leave for reasons other then those stated above (and classified as "favorable") is the College's counseling center. For although a multitude of college segments are involved in the many recommendations made within this report, the unique and personalized nature of the factors that most students give for leaving the College must be handled by the members of the A.C.C. academic community than can properly respond to these problems/situations. Hence, the role of the counselor at Allegany Community College can play an important part in the reduction of the attrition at A.C.C.

PART III BIBLIOGRAPHY

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3. Jones, Gordon, "Comparative Study of Persister and Non-Persister College Students," Vancouver City College, June, 1972.

4. Powell, James R., "Student Attrition in Higher Education," Central Florida Community Colleges Consortium: Needs Assessment Project, August, 1974.

APPENDIX A

Copy of the Survey Instrument

Dear Former Student:

According to our records, you attended Allegany Community College in Fall Semester (1975), but did not return for the current Spring Semester. We are interested in the particular reasons why you did not return.

Please answer the brief questionnaire below. Then place this form in the self-addressed and stamped envelope provided. No postage is necessary.

We would like your reply within a week if possible.

Sincerely,

Roger C. Andersen

Roger C. Andersen, Director
Office of Institutional Research

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1. PLEASE INDICATE THE REASON(S) WHY YOU DID NOT RETURN TO ACC THIS SEMESTER.

_____completed course requirements for a degree or certificate
_____financial problems
_____entered job market
_____achieved educational goals
_____military service
_____medical reasons
_____marriage
_____not satisfied with curriculum
_____transferred to a four-year college or university
_____changed my career goals
_____other: please state here: _____

2. DO YOU PLAN TO RETURN TO ACC?

_____NO
_____DON'T KNOW
_____YES. WHEN?

_____SUMMER (1976)
_____FALL (1976)
_____SPRING (1977)
_____DON'T KNOW

3. WERE YOU SATISFIED WITH YOUR EDUCATION EXPERIENCES AT ACC?

_____YES
_____NO. WHAT SPECIFICALLY WERE YOU DISSATISFIED WITH? _____

_____

_____

4. OTHER COMMENTS? _____

_____

_____

APPENDIX B

Responses from Question #4:

"Other Comments?"

1. I took the American Forum course from Times-New. It was hard to determine the material required for the tests only meeting monthly.

2. I can now appreciate the close friendship and understanding which an ACC student receives. At Frostburg, being a commuting student, I have not received the same as yet.

3. I personally was well satisfied with my educational experiences at ACC. I hope this gives you the information that you needed to hear.

4. I found Dr. Tichenor's course "Ascent of Man" very stimulating and leading to further reading.

5. I enjoyed my educational experiences at ACC very much and feel I accomplished everything I wanted to at this time.

6. I think that ACC is an excellent institution with a fine faculty and an outstandin curriculum. I feel this school is an asset to Cumberland and the surrounding area.

7. I was enrolled in the Secretarial Science program, which I can only say has given me excellent training in my endeavor to survive in this crazy world. I was, and still am, extremely pleased with the program I was lucky enough to be a part of.

8. I was very satisfied with the educational goals which I achieved at ACC and hope to return for other courses relating to my career.

9. I found ACC to be a friendly and warm campus with superb rapport between students and faculty. The faculty and counseling services offered themselves to the students, and no one could ask for more.

10. ACC gives everyone in this community an opportunity to broaden their education.

11. I am quite satisfied with my educational experiences at ACC. If your curriculum offerings are such that I can use them, I shall do so in the future.

12. I liked going to ACC, it was a good educational experience. In the future, sure, I'll return and maybe go part-time.

13. The faculty was in my opinion, highly qualified and responsible, and I only wish there was some way that I could have remained at ACC for the entire four semesters. The education at ACC, I feel, is lacking nothing.

14. I was particularly satisfied with the atmosphere of friendliness and helpfulness I felt at ACC.

15. I think ACC is a fine junior College-I enjoyed studying and working there.

16. I was pleased with the quality of education at ACC. There was a good atmosphere and opportunities for learning.

17. Just for the record, I was really pleased with ACC.

18. I am enjoying the Adult Education Program since I have my degree.

19. I was favorable impressed. I had two excellent instructors and as soon as time and my health allows I intend to return.

20. ACC is a great school.

21. The course was interesting.

22. I am satisfied with your service and all of the help I have received from all of you at ACC.

23. I think ACC is a wonderful school for the community and have enjoyed everything that I have taken. I miss not being there this semester.

24. I am taking three Adult Education classes this semester and feel my money is better spent.

25. I was very impressed with the faculty and curriculums are excellent.

26. It's a good two-year college. I kind of miss it.

27. I liked the college and would have been happy if it wasn't so far from home.

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